

CENTRAL GATEWAY WORKSHOP REPORT

FOREWORD

Over the past year residents as well as property and business owners in the Central Gateway have committed themselves to working with each other and the City to clearly define their goals and objectives for the Central Gateway and research opportunities for addressing the issues identified. This project was initiated by a group of community representatives and has made successful progress over the past twelve months to set the process in motion. The Seattle Planning Commission was asked to take the lead, with assistance from the Design Commission and SEATRAN in coordinating two community workshops focused on creating specific actions that address the community's key goals.

This report is a summary of the effort put forth, a recap of the distance traveled thus far, and an outline of the next steps identified by the community through this effort. It describes how the effort was first organized to get the ball rolling, and the two community workshops and their results. These included goals and objectives, specific design concepts and specific recommended actions for improving the Central Gateway area.

Throughout this process participants have been able to get involved in the process, speak their minds freely, listen to both other citizens and City staff, and examine how to create the community they envision. This is a product of dedicated and energetic citizens working together to bring their vision to fruition.

The Planning Commission wants to thank a number of people and groups who made these workshops so productive. Thanks to the Workshop Planning Committee, composed of five neighborhood representatives, to Planning and Design Commission staff and City staff from SEATRAN for their hard work and commitment through weekly meetings, preparation and participation in the two workshops.

Thanks to the Planning and Design Commissioners and Pedestrian Advisory Board members who facilitated the small groups in each of the workshops and moderated the second workshop. Thanks to Akhtar Badshah who introduced the "appreciative inquiry" process to the pre-workshop and first workshop process. And finally thanks to all of the citizens who attended the workshops. It was only through the efforts and coming together of this diverse set of people that we have been able to create clear recommendations for both immediate improvements and longer-term strategies and improvements for the area.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 1998 citizen representatives from the Central Area, First Hill, and Chinatown/International District came together to draft a letter to Mayor Schell requesting City assistance to revitalize the confluence of these three neighborhoods. The area was coined the Central Gateway.

Mayor Schell and Deputy Mayor Tom Byers participated in a walking tour of the area with community representatives and saw first hand the concerns that residents, property owners, and business owners alike share in the area. The discussion of the area focused around four key issues, including transportation, pedestrian access, economic development, and open space. The overriding issue of creating gateways into the individual neighborhoods from the confluence was also encouraged.

In response to the citizen concern and involvement, the City made a commitment to help the neighborhoods hold a series of two community workshops in order to come to a consensus regarding goals and objectives for the area as well as create preliminary design concepts to meet the goals identified. **Additionally, \$250,000 was allocated in the 1999 City Budget for transportation improvement in the Central Area Gateway.**

In October of 1998 a workshop committee was formed including citizen representatives from each neighborhood and City staff. Weekly meetings brought this group together to organize the community workshops and sort through background information that would be needed to assist in the workshop process. The group decided on a pre-workshop session in early January to identify issues and possibilities, followed by a series of two community workshops in February and March. One of the desired outcomes was a set of specific recommendations for physical improvements to be funded with the \$250,000 allocated to SEATLAN for Central Gateway projects..

WORKSHOP I

Preparation

The purpose of the first Central Gateway workshop was to bring stakeholders together to identify an agreed upon set of issues and ideas to further develop as recommended projects and improvements. It was important to first set the context for the overall project. This began with identifying, reaffirming, and prioritizing common issues and goals from each of the neighborhoods. The neighborhood plans for the three primary neighborhoods were referred to in this capacity. Initially the first workshop was organized to focus on the transportation system, transit service, pedestrian access and safety, open space, economic development, and the interface between adjoining neighborhoods.

The desired outcome of the first workshop was a set of shared goals and issues to be addressed concerns for the Central Gateway. This framework would then be used to develop more specific projects and design concepts in the second workshop.

The first Central Gateway Workshop was held February 6, 1999 at Bailey Gatzert Elementary School, located in the area. It was coordinated and sponsored by the Seattle Planning Commission and the Central Gateway Workshop Committee. Co-sponsors involved in the Workshop Committee included the Seattle Design Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Board, SEATRAN, and representatives from the Central Area, Chinatown/International District, First Hill, 12th Avenue and Jackson Place neighborhoods.

Planning Commissioner Rhonnel Sotelo and Akhtar Badshah, a consultant and instructor in the University of Washington's Urban Design and Planning Department moderated the workshop. Professor Badshah worked with the Workshop Committee to incorporate an approach called Appreciative Inquiry. This involved paired interviews conducted among community members prior to the workshop to identify common interests and personal stake in the community. This information was used to help develop the focus and prepare appropriate materials for the workshop.

The Workshop

Mayor Paul Schell welcomed participants to the February 6, 1999 Central Gateway Workshop. He encouraged the community's efforts in the process and applauded their strong interest in raising the visibility of this area as the gateway to several of Seattle's most established neighborhoods.

Commissioner Rhonnel Sotelo briefly discussed the project background and the context of the workshop. Members from the Workshop Committee recapped the results of the community interviews they had conducted within the community and reviewed the possibility statements that had been developed from those results.

Participants then worked in small groups that focused on specific topics, including Movement and Access, Built Environment, Economics, and Social and Cultural Issues. Each group discussed the possibility statement that had been developed for their topic and brainstormed ideas for addressing the subject within the Central Area Gateway. At the conclusion of the morning session, the groups shared their key points with the larger group.

Akhtar Badshah moderated the afternoon session, attempting to bring together common themes and identify specific actions that could be taken. All participants were asked to make a specific commitment to complete before the second workshop; these were written down and people were asked to report progress on their commitment prior to the second workshop. The commitments ranged from looking into sites for murals to gathering information regarding street lighting. Planning Commission staff committed to compiling the small group ideas as well as the list of commitments and sending them to all participants in preparation for the second workshop.

The workshop concluded with closing remarks delivered by Council member Richard Conlin who thanked participants for being involved in their community and encouraged each participant to continue their involvement and support of the area.

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP RESULTS

1. Physical Environment: Movement and Access

Two groups focused on this topic since it was of significant interest to many participants. The following is a summary of both groups.

Possibility Statement:

The Central Gateway area is.....

an area that serves as an important entry to a number of communities, with pedestrian-friendly streets and sidewalks that provide appropriate access to and from nearby neighborhoods as well as major regional destinations with through traffic needs handled effectively and safely on major arterials.

Summary of Issues and Ideas:

Traffic and Parking:

- 👍 Improve traffic flow, especially through key intersection at Jackson, Rainier, Boren and 14th.
- 👍 Reduce cut-through traffic in the Jackson Place neighborhood (from Jackson/Rainier and Dearborn/Rainier intersections)
- 👍 Consider 2 hour zones to eliminate commuter parking (10th)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

- 👍 Identify major gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network and provide connections
- 👍 Improve bicycle access along Rainier (Dearborn Jackson and 12th)
- 👍 Improve sidewalks and pedestrian environment along Jackson, Boren, 12th with street trees, fixing broken sidewalks, installing clear crosswalks. Address problems from dumpsters, overgrown weeds/blackberries, driveway access and poles blocking pedestrian access

Transit Improvements

- 👍 Develop long term plan to increase coverage of the neighborhood by transit to provide better access and use of transit

- 👍 Increase service and consider routing options for #36, #60 and #9 routes, particularly to accommodate connections to the light rail system when it is constructed.

2. Built Environment

Possibility Statement:

The Central Gateway area is.....

Visually attractive and pedestrian friendly gateway and destination for its diverse neighborhoods which welcomes and facilitates neighbors and visitors use of the area.

Issues and Ideas

- 👍 Built environment should be one that people interact with; pay attention to how buildings face the street; retain historical “look”;
- 👍 Enhance pedestrian environment and retain pedestrian scale throughout the area
- 👍 Central Gathering Place rather than gateway may be easier to embrace and understand; a place where various cultures/neighborhoods come together;
- 👍 Develop gateway symbols/signage that show destination, transition, historic features and sense of movement through the area --visual clues that provide a sense of place;
- 👍 Use lighting design that is distinctive to each neighborhood; cultural landmarks that celebrate the cultural history and character of the areas;
- 👍 Use Crime prevention through design (CPTED)
- 👍 Vision of 12th Avenue is to have mixed use vitality (like 15th Ave. E.)

3. Economics

Possibility Statement

The Central Gateway area is.....

an area that is a vital vibrant economically successful destination area reflecting the economic and cultural diversity of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Issues and Ideas

- 👍 Area should celebrate, not just reflect diversity of the communities;
- 👍 Support and find ways for small ethnically diverse businesses to locate and remain in the area (explore condo commercial buildings; financial assistance to small businesses);
- 👍 Promote welcoming appearance of businesses, clean but not sanitized;
Provide safe and convenient access to businesses: adequate parking(including shared parking), safe and inviting pedestrian access

4. Social and Cultural Character and Opportunities

Possibility Statement

The Central Gateway area is.....

a gathering place for diverse neighborhoods which welcomes both neighbors and visitors alike to share in their cultural and recreational resources.

Issues and Ideas

Sense of Place/Creating Community

- 👍 Create a sense of place that celebrates ethnic and community diversity
- 👍 Promote historical and cultural interchange and exposure with projects such as a living wall; a ceremonial space and community celebrations and activities (jointly sponsored by neighborhoods)

Communication

- 👍 Create a information clearinghouse and exchange (kiosks, newsletters, web site)
- 👍 Create visible signage, heritage walk, murals that communicate cultural and ethnic diversity and identify key places, transitions from one neighborhood to another

Youth

- 👍 Work with neighborhood programs and agencies to provide youth programs and job training

Housing

- 👍 Prevent gentrification to help promote and maintain the area's diversity in housing and businesses
- 👍 Provide support to keep housing affordable and to encourage home ownership among those who live there (including education and outreach; making loans available)

Transportation

- 👍 Create and maintain a balance transportation system through the Central Gateway with improved transit service, pedestrian bicycle improvements to make area pedestrian and bicycle friendly and improved traffic circulation, addressing congestion on key arterials

WORKSHOP II

Preparation

Immediately following the first Central Gateway Workshop on February 6, 1999, the Workshop Planning Committee reviewed workshop results and began to plan for the second workshop. An important step to be completed was identification and analysis of key issues raised in the first workshop. A detailed list of these issues and ideas for resolving them was prepared based on the small groups work and the general session in the first workshop. A large majority of these issues related to traffic/transportation issues.

SEATRAN staff analyzed these questions/ideas and brought back to the Workshop committee detailed analysis and recommendations regarding feasible solutions. In a working session SEATRAN staff, other City staff and citizens on the workshop committee discussed these analysis and recommendations, agreeing on the refined alternatives that would form the framework for the second workshop. Information was also sought from other City department representatives regarding additional issues related to economic development and open space.

The purpose of the second workshop was to generate specific recommended physical improvements to the Central Gateway area through a hands-on design session focused on the several key intersections and streets in the Central Gateway. To accomplish this the Planning Commission invited additional current and past Planning and Design Commissioners and Pedestrian Advisory Board members to participate and contribute design expertise and skills. Invitations went to the original mailing list and calls were made to those who attended the first workshop to encourage their participation.

The Workshop

The second workshop was held on March 16, in a four-hour evening session (5 to 9 p.m.) at Bailey-Gatzert Elementary School. Over fifty people attended this event, including citizens, Planning Commissioners and City staff. Planning Commission Chair Karen Daubert opened the meeting with brief introductions. Commissioner Rhonnel Sotelo briefly reviewed the outcomes of the first workshop than outlined the purpose of the second workshop. As he noted this second workshop was a working session, focused on developing specific recommendations for key intersections and addressing topics identified in the first workshop.

After brief instructions on the format of the working session, participants went to work in one of five teams. Four of these focused on specific locations (12th and Jackson, 12th/Yesler/Boren, 14th/Jackson/Rainier, Jackson Street) and the fifth was assigned to focus on the overall Gateway Area. Each group had a facilitator and a visual scribe and was given a set of questions to address in their session.

After a brief discussion of overall goals and issues, the teams focused on identifying specific physical improvements and priority actions for their assigned areas. At the end of the first hour each team gave a brief report to share what they were generating with the other teams. This allowed teams to share good ideas, identify areas of conflict and overlap.

At the conclusion of three hours of concentrated work, the teams prepared and presented a summary of their work to the full group. Each team highlighted the key issues and recommendations and answered questions.

In the final half-hour, Marty Curry, Planning Commission Director facilitated a discussion among workshop participants to generate key priority recommendations for implementation. This resulted in a list of 10 to 15 recommendations, focused mostly on specific physical improvements. Ms. Curry also shared a proposal from Mayor Schell to make temporary improvements to the Lloyd Rocket site. He suggested making improvements to the sidewalks around the perimeter and installing a bamboo fence, possibly with festive lighting woven in it. Mrs. Lloyd indicated support for something of a temporary nature. In the ensuing discussion an idea emerged to work with students to paint a mural on a fence or the building. This elicited a positive response from participants, including Mrs. Lloyd who indicated a willingness to talk with the City and community about carrying out some temporary improvements in the near future.

The workshop closed with thanks to all who contributed time, energy and expertise and with the three commitments:

- The Planning Commission would prepare a final report from the workshops;
- SEATRAN would work with the community on identifying specific projects to fund and implement.
- The three neighborhoods would continue to work together to move these recommendations forward.

TEAM SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

JACKSON/12TH

- Standard lanterns like I.D.
- Screening of dumpsters
- Pedestrian amenities
- Pavement treatment and lighting to increase pedestrian safety
- Street tree pattern
- Lighting on Jose Rizal Bridge (part of millennium celebration?)
- Gateway to celebrate the bridge
- Opportunity with project at I-5 and Jackson to use undeveloped ROW for hill-climb to Yesler Terrace.
Would provide increased access and open space in area
- Close off South Washington to create a turn around.
- Close slip lane at Washington and Boren and plant trees, creating green space

JACKSON/RAINIER/14TH

- Traffic improvements
left turn lanes to Jackson from Boren and Rainier with two left turn lanes from Dearborn to Rainier
- Goals for Intersection
more emphasis on full access for turning
include bicycles but recognize due to traffic volumes pedestrian scale improvements are better focused elsewhere
painted crosswalks
mitigate pedestrian access
- Visual appearance
paint poles
street trees
signage
tie into downtown way-finding
street signs at Dearborn/Rainier
welcome sign at intersections of Jackson/Rainier/14th

YESLER/BOREN/12TH

- Let pedestrian amenities be the signature
- Let Boren be Boren
- Take advantage of opportunities to work with developers at Lloyd Rocket site
- Eliminate slip lanes and create green zones
- Develop more landing zones for pedestrians along Yesler and across Boren/12th
- Street tree planting

extend 12th Ave zone to north

- Landscaping with private property owners
- Portal
 - signature art*

JACKSON STREET CORRIDOR

- Heritage walk
 - look at cultural heritage in a linear manner, chronologically by block*
 - natural and cultural history*
 - include glimpse of future*
 - weave from Jackson to other intersections*
 - use lighting as element*
 - tiling*
 - laser etching*
 - kiosk*
 - bus stops*
- Integrate pedestrian and bike lanes to street
 - consider different locations for bike lanes (inside parking vs. outside parking)*
 - textured crosswalks*
 - curb bulbs*
- Integrate lighting from 23rd and Jackson

CENTRAL GATEWAY AREA

- Green zones and landscaping
- Tree plantings and tree patterns
- Use triangle as theme
- Lighting
 - vary character and level of lighting*
- Traffic
- Gateway -- Jackson under I-5
- Cultural Walk
 - blending and connecting*
- Visual cues coming into Gateway
 - unique as well as blending*
 - blended in gateway area*
 - unifying theme to signify the area*
- Reconfigure/reconceptualize

Special Opportunity: Lloyd's Rocket Site

For a number of people the Lloyd's Rocket Site epitomizes the opportunities to enhance the areas with a sense of gateways into and through these several historic and vital neighborhoods. However, citizens and City officials also recognize and honor the property owner's long term intent to redevelop this site

The Mayor asked Planning Commission staff to pose an opportunity to provide some temporary improvements to the site that would make this very visible triangle more attractive during the time before it is redeveloped. This idea was posed to the property owner and other workshop participants at the March 16 workshop. The response was universally positive, and the property owner encouraged the City and community to bring a specific design concept to be discussed and considered. Since this is on private property the City, the community and the property owner would need to identify ways to work together to accomplish any improvements.

Possible Temporary Improvements to enhance the appearance and safety of this key triangle site:

- Remove any loose debris and materials on the site
- Install a temporary fence, possibly with materials such as bamboo (not a solid surface) close to the building
- Work with Bailey Gatzert School to make and install murals on panels bordering the fence
- Add decorative lighting along the fence.
- Make improvements at the corners where redevelopment is not anticipated (the sidewalk at the south corner may also be improved as part of the 12th and Boren project).